

Annual Meeting Report from the Chair

Mary Lu Harle

May 3, 2014

We welcome both longtime members and new members to our 2014 Annual Meeting!

Over the past year, Alaska Common Ground has been working to energize our organization. We have updated our website, www.akcommonground.org, to improve the overall look and the calendar functions, as well as update our content. We continue to add information on topics of interest to our members and upcoming events. We also have a Facebook page, and are steadily increasing our followers. Please join them by “liking” our page.

During the winter, we held several board sessions devoted to focusing on ways to improve the events and forums we sponsor and to enhance our visibility and membership. We are currently in the midst of a membership campaign to gain new members. Today we are voting on proposed updates to our by-laws and to add two new board members. Finally we are planning four forums for the summer and another major forum in October. Over the past year, we co-sponsored an event with the Alaska World Affairs Council – “I can see Russia from Here: the 25th Anniversary of the Friendship Flight” with panelists Lt. Governor Mead Treadwell, former Governor Steve Cowper and Willie Hensley. We also co-sponsored the Robert Reich film “Inequality for All” with Let’s Talk Anchorage. The Bear Tooth Theater was filled for two evenings that resulted in a great deal of interest and discussion on the film.

Alaska Common Ground continues to support and co-sponsor Let’s Talk Anchorage, which has held a successful series of

discussions. Bill Hall, who leads Let's Talk Anchorage, is leaving the board, but Alaska Common Ground will continue our support and co-sponsorship of this program. It is a great opportunity for citizens to discuss and deliberate issues of the day. All these events can be found on our calendar.

We are pleased to present our program today – an overview of the initiative and referendum processes and an overview of the three initiatives and one referendum that will be on the ballots this year. This panel is a prelude to our Summer Ballot Measure Series, to be held on Wednesdays from 7:00 to 9:00 pm in the Wilda Marston Theater at the Loussac Library. July 23 – Oil Tax Referendum (SB 21 Repeal) July 30 – Minimum Wage Initiative August 6 – Marijuana Legalization Initiative August 13 – Bristol Bay Forever Initiative On Saturday, October 4, we will present a major all day forum on Alaska's Fiscal Future, also held at the Wilda Marston Theater at the Loussac Library. We look forward to seeing you at these forums! If you would like to help with planning these events, let us know! We'll keep you informed as we move forward on them.

Longtime board member Bill Hall is leaving the board, and we thank him for his work on the board and his leadership of Let's Talk Anchorage. Leonard Lawson resigned from the board earlier this year due to health reasons and we send him our best wishes. We want to thank Alaska Common Ground members who have helped this past year. They have played an important part in our activities. Jenifer Kohout – Program Committee

- Susan Klein – Website Committee
- Karen Hunt – Let's Talk Anchorage Steering Committee
- Mia Oxley – Let's Talk Anchorage Steering Committee
- Dick LaFever – Let's Talk Anchorage Steering Committee
- Bill Falsey – Event planning
- Taylor Brelsford – Annual meeting panelist and event planning
- Harry Crawford – Annual meeting panelist

Our great thanks go to the Stoel-Rives Law Firm for generously allowing ACG to use their conference room, their telephone and refreshments for our board meetings. Our thanks also go to the Anchorage Public Libraries for co-sponsoring our upcoming forums and providing the venue for them. We offer a big cheer and thank you to our staff support, Kari Gardey. She takes care of ACG work, keeps us on track, and makes us look good! Finally we thank you, our members, for your continued support. You are the heart of Alaska Common Ground! We hope you will visit our webpage (www.akcommonground.org) and our Facebook page and stay in touch with us!